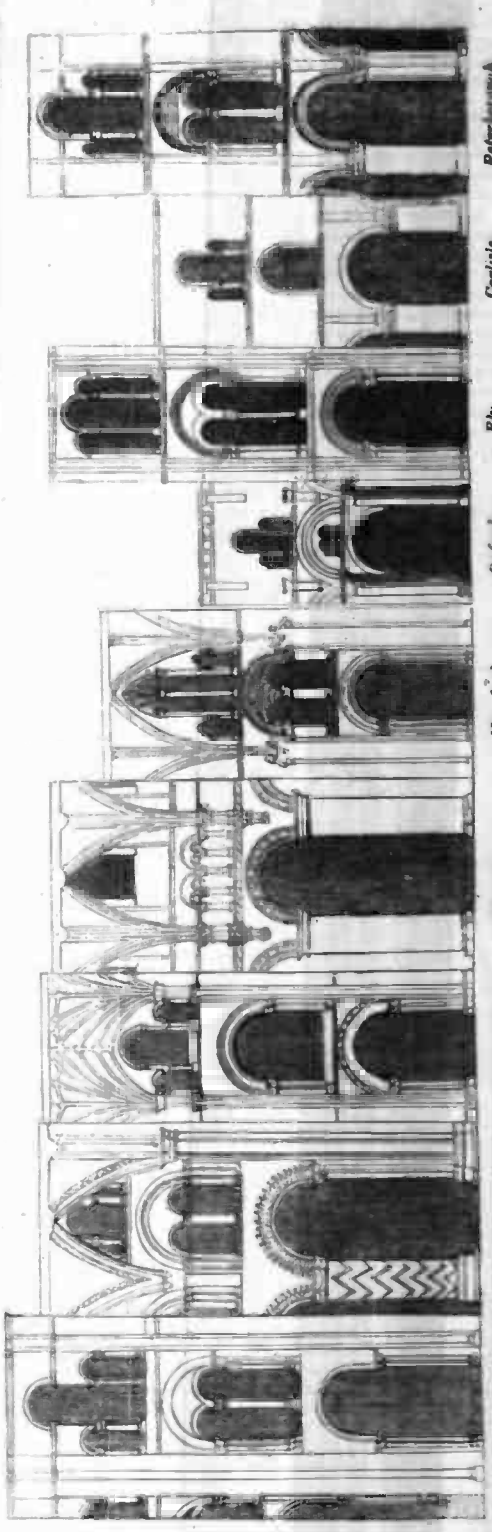

A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF (ONE COMPARTMENT IN THE NAVE OF EACH OF) THE PRINCIPAL NORMAN CATHEDRALS IN ENGLAND.

NORMAN ARCHITECTURE.

Nature, in her productions slow, aspires
By just degrees to reach perfection's height:
So mimic Art works leisurely, till Time
Improve the piece, or wise Experience give
The proper finishing."

SOMERVILLE'S "CHASE."

THE style of architecture introduced by the Normans into England did not very materially differ from the last period of SAXON, the only difference discernible being in the magnitude and length of the buildings of the conquerors, for it must be remembered that Norman architects had been invited and came to this country long before the Conquest; therefore it need not be matter of surprise there should be so little difference in the styles. It is an ignorance of this fact which has led many of our antiquaries to assign the date of a building as posterior to the Conquest, when, in fact, it was built anterior to it.

Waiving altogether any discussion as to the origin or invention of the erroneously called "Gothic" styles (a discussion which could hardly lead to any satisfactory results), I will remark, that however much our ancestors might have thought of fame in their own day, they did not seem to trouble themselves to publish it to future ages; and, as Mr. Milner observes, they were more anxious about being good than appearing so.

Almost immediately that William the Conqueror had taken possession of this country, he filled all the ecclesiastical benefices with his Norman followers, and they, having riches in abundance, soon set to work and pulled down most of the Saxon buildings of any consequence, and rebuilt them in a style of greater magnificence and extent; Saxon cathedrals, which before were only a hundred and twenty feet in length, now became extended under the Norman prelates to the length of six hundred feet, and old St. Paul's, in London, built by Mauritius, was the enormous length of 690 feet. Such was the rage for building grand edifices at that time, that no less than twelve or fourteen cathedrals, nearly the same number of monasteries, and village churches without number, were erected in an incredibly short space of time.

The lay barons, for their own safety, were not behindhand in diligence: castles of a formidable aspect were seen to be seen in all parts of England; the store-house of human invention was ransacked for their service, and although the Norman castles cannot boast of the domestic comforts of the nineteenth century, yet they can lay claim to an originality of design and strength of purpose little inferior to the present time.

To quote a much-respected author in speaking of the style introduced by the Normans; and their rage for building, he says, "Such were the Normans at the time when they entered England, being without question the most valiant, magnificent, studious, enterprising, and religious people of the eleventh century; and, we must add, they were the very flower of Normandy and the neighbouring provinces, both in church and state, who crossed the sea and settled in our island. The Continent was despoiled to enrich England. Such being the character of the Normans, is it surprising that they should build such sumptuous edifices, such a bold deviation from any thing that had ever been done before?

The general characteristics of the Norman style are boldness, both of the parts and of the whole, semicircular arches, sometimes with plain mouldings, but most frequently the mouldings are enriched with the zig-zag square billet, roll billet, or lozenge ornaments; and one great feature may be observed in the annnexed engraving, taking one compartment—Winchester, for instance—the lower story has one opening, the second story two, and the triforium has three openings pierced in the wall, dividing the nave from the aisles; this is the case also with Durham, Hereford, Rochester, Oxford, Ely, Peterborough, and most of the abbatial and conventual churches.

The Norman style lasted about 150 years (allowing that its adoption in England was about thirty years anterior to the Conquest). The transition style, which succeeded it, was a kind of solidified conflict between two different kinds of arch, the semicircular and the pointed; but the latter finally conquered and reigned triumphant for a time; but that in its turn gave place to other styles, and it seems as though a complete war of stones, mortar, and novelty was kept up for a space of nearly five centuries, till finally the commotion ceased altogether.

In contemplating the interior of our Norman cathedrals, the mind is impressed with a feeling of the sublime, which later styles fail to excite, and it is not to association to which we must ascribe this feeling, but to the harmony and proportion of the parts to the whole, and to a certain manliness of character about it which inspires the mind with a religious awe.

J. L. C.

MR. BERNHARDT'S PATENT.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—My object in writing to your journal was, to shew that flues, both horizontal and perpendicular, built in the thickness of walls for the purpose of warming and ventilation, were in use years before Mr. Bernhardt's patent, he having in his letters *claimed them as his sole invention. He has since acknowledged they were in use before* (and I. e. they are not his invention), thus contradicting his previous statement. Having thus gained the point I had in view, I wish to remark in reply to his last assertions, that if he had referred to my first letter, he would have found I had stated, that I did not know who was the inventor of the system shewn in the plan of the building sent you. For some reason best known to himself, such a straightforward course he has not taken, being, I suppose, not adapted to his purpose.

The reply to the objections put forward by him is, that, after near sixteen years' trial, it answers admirably and suits the purpose intended (see particulars with the plans) without being open to any one of them. As I am neither professor of warming and ventilating buildings, or curer of smoky chimneys, by an infallible method, or any other, I leave to him an open field to solicit orders, and for his full practice, assuring I do not envy him his "occupation," which, like that of *Othello* (if left to himself), will soon be "gone."

I am, Mr. Editor, your obedient servant.

T. H. C.

Ruthin, 26th August, 1843.

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